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SOCIAL ACTION

VOL. 2 NO. 12

MARCH 1953

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To Our Subscribers

As you well remember, circumstances led us to begin *Social Action* on April the first ; on several counts, an awkward date !

Recently patrons and readers insisted that it would be easier for subscribers, librarians and everybody to adjust our issues to the civil calendar and to prepare a new series to run from January 1954. In order to meet their request, it is necessary to arrange for a period of transition.

Hence it was decided by the Editorial Board to complete Vol. III within the coming nine months, April—December 1953.

The Subscription will remain unchanged (Rs. 4 or 6s. 6d; or \$ 1.50 or the equivalent), the number of pages will be increased to 40 from April. Moreover new features, chronicle, survey of reviews, correspondence column, etc., will be introduced so as to make Social Action less ponderous and more informative.

What interests us is not so much what gets between its covers as what gets off its pages into the minds of our readers. Suggestions on that point will be gratefully received.

HERE AND THERE

No Wishful Thinking

Sporadic purges in Communist countries are proof enough that all is not well in those Edens of the workers. Mr. Truman in one of his last messages put his finger on their basic weakness, the lack of liberty, and he ventured to forecast that man's instinctive craving for freedom would bring about revolutions or at least radical changes in the red dictatorships. Normally it should work that way, but several factors must be taken into account to tone down impatient optimism and prevent wishful thinking, particularly about Russia.

It is no easy task to make out the psychology of the Russian masses ; travellers who are feted in conducted tours and are innocent of Soviet dialects and dialectical machiavellism are unreliable ; reports from refugees or from officials are biased, and the most reliable surmise is best deducted from general facts about which all seem to be in agreement.

Red Indoctrination

The first fact is the continuous systematic indoctrination inspired and controlled by the Government, which has the monopoly of education at all levels, of the Press, the radio and all means of information and propaganda. The Government's doctrine turns round two main points : Communism is the only scientific theory and the only system that can give the masses the maximum well-being and freedom ; the countries beyond the Iron Curtain, particularly the U.S.A., are sham democracies and preserves of capitalist exploitation, misery and enslavement. No contrary information penetrates from outside unless after it has been doctored by government officials and this government monopoly of mass indoctrination has been going on relentlessly for more than thirty years. How then could the Russians under forty-five disbelieve what they were told every day since

their teens? How could they form a correct and precise picture of conditions in our democracies?

Russia's Progress

On the other hand, it is undeniable that for millions and millions, the red regime has increased their well-being, and even what they feel to be liberty. The backward peoples and minorities of Europe and Asia have been given free education in their own language; they have seen their cultural autonomy recognised and developed, even if it was developed on strict government lines which were ever proclaimed to be the very best.

It is also undeniable that the economic condition of the masses has improved, though at a cruel cost; even the peasants who offered resistance to the red super-tsarist oppression benefited from the better seeds, machinery and cultivation reforms (this is true of those who survived). Never did Russian peasants and workmen nurse the sense of liberty and autonomy which is basic in democracy. They are unable to compare their lot with the conditions elsewhere, they know only the Russian past and present and they rightly judge they are better off today than yesterday. They experience a feeling of greater ease, and economic ease is first on the list of priorities for toilers who have little aptitude or taste for anything higher or finer.

Patriotic Solidarity

Finally, the present restrictions are not considered as permanent; official propaganda promises further betterment and full-fledged liberty and happiness, once the democratic world will let the government free from any fear of aggression and able to perfect their system unhampered by international tension. Patriotism, which is traditional with the children of Mother Russia, rallies the masses round the red banner. Would it not be futile and even dangerous to expect that they would welcome invaders as "liberators"?

The Solvent of Dictatorship

How then can radical changes occur in Red Russia ? Some people speak of a palace revolution. Even if the party-bosses are imprisoned in a steel-jacket Communism, they keep their idiosyncrasies ; pride, greed and all passions are no monopoly of democracies ; rivalries are rife at the highest levels and the possibility of violent disruption should not be ruled out. A more normal evolution should be expected. Once the euphoric phase coming from accrued economic ease will have passed, the masses will desire, demand, exact more and more in the line of welfare, liberty and culture ; with economic freedom the craving for political liberty will surge and grow. Symptoms are already apparent in some groups which are vital in national life : scientists, literateurs, technicians, skilled labourers. For those people who feel a creative urge, restrictions imposed by politicians for political purposes will become irksome, even intolerable.

In these middle-class groups situated between the party bosses and the inert masses and ascending in the social scale (classless society is a myth), the resistance to, and fight against, political dictatorship will arise and spread all round. The intelligentsia (it was given an official social status at the last Moscow Congress) should be the first to find out what is wrong with Stalinism, the first to work for a change ; the recantations of some Russian scientists point to the existence as well as to the weakness of the mental revolution among the intelligentsia. Salvation will not come from the masses but from the leaders of the masses. Ideas rule the world in Sovietland as well as in any other land.

Identical considerations and conclusions should not be made about the satellites of Russia ; all have not known the cultural or political past as Russia, all have not known the same ruthless oppression for so long. But in all of them the Red dictatorship betrays the same features and develops parallel trends.

A. L.

WEALTH & DESTITUTION

When will we have a social week in India, dedicated to the study of the social problems of our country and their solution in the light of Christian principles? This is not an entirely original idea. For we should only be imitating countries like France, Belgium, Switzerland and Canada, where for the last thirty to forty years, such social weeks have been held. A national discussion of this type has obvious advantages. It helps to focus attention on the essential economic and social diseases that are undermining the health of the community, and if no clear prescription is possible, the conference can at least outline the policy that should remedy or check the danger. It makes men and women of good-will realise that they must wake up from their complacent attitudes of imagining that all is well with the country so long as their stomachs are full. Above all, it serves to bring forcibly to the mind of the people the deep interest that the Catholic Church evinces in the social problems of the times. The Church is not only concerned with the spiritual side of man's nature, but is of necessity interested in his bodily well-being, precisely because man is a single entity of body and soul, a human person, with physical and spiritual needs and urges, that are profoundly dependent and intimately linked up with each other.

The French Social Week

The 39th Session of the French Social Week held last year at Dijon in France concentrated on the study of the crucial question of the modern world, Wealth and Destitution, or to put it more colourfully, the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty. The National Income of France has doubled in the last 30 years, it was noted at the Conference. It has multiplied six times during the past 100 years. This speaks well for the country which has not suffered from the effects of a stagnating economic set-back, but on the contrary prospered from the increasing productive tempo

of its agriculture, trade and industry. Despite this fact, there is still plenty of misery and hard poverty prevalent everywhere.

The Papal Letter

In such high appreciation does Rome regard these annual conferences, that the Pope addressed a special letter to the President of the Social Week, M. Flory. The Papal missive drew pointed attention to the social and international aspects of the subject matter of the conference. The advance of industrialisation, said the Pope, while increasing production, had given birth to the industrial proletariat, who have been and are still compelled to live in sub-human conditions. And though their situation had been improved by social legislation, the two world wars have ushered in an era of world-wide misery and scarcity. On the other hand, people are more conscious today of the prevailing inequality than they were formerly. The world is divided into poorer and richer countries, and each country into poorer and richer classes, with a deep sense of mutual antagonism prevailing between the wealthy and the destitute. The extravagant and wasteful expenditure of the rich has increased the sense of bitterness and frustration of the poor. Only a just distribution of wealth, buttressed by social activity on the part of the state, can help to solve the problem.

Gospel Teaching

The Pope has a word of warning for those who possess the goods of this world in abundance. He reminds them of the gospel teaching on detachment from things of earthly mould, for worldly wealth is not to be sought after for its own sake, but as a means to achieve one's spiritual destiny. Neither can the rich man completely ignore his poor neighbour, with whom he must share what remains after the satisfaction of his own essential needs.

The Church makes no distinction between rich and poor. On the contrary, She displays a tender respect for the poor, since in serving them, She believes She is serving Christ, who loved to be identified with the poor, and regards any kind act done to them as done to Himself. While demanding a fair distribution of wealth, the Church realises that there will always be suffering and misery. She does not believe in an earthly paradise. There will be ample room for charity, but charity must always strive after the establishment of a just social order, and not merely try to lessen the deficiencies of a social structure that is essentially unjust. First comes justice, then charity.

The Social Organism

The purpose of the social organism is to provide for the well-being of individuals and families. Production has been vastly increased by industrialisation. But in the distribution of wealth each one should be given his due share as a human person and in accordance with his human basic needs. Normally for most people the distribution takes place through the wage or the salary. The Pope demands that the wage be a just one ; and beside the wage, the employee must be made to feel that through his co-operation with his employer, he is rendering a service to society. This aspect should not be forgotten, since it helps a man to take pride in his work and makes him feel a responsible member of the community.

The State

The Pope insists that the duty of the state is not to substitute itself for private enterprise but to see that the economic and social structure helps the individual to perfect himself in every way, and especially in the first place by providing him with a sufficiency of well-being and welfare. It is for the state to prevent the wastage of wealth that is still prevalent. The state should encourage the investment of surplus wealth for increased production. The poor are

the special care of the state. They stand in greater need of its help and protection than the rich. Their low incomes must be raised by a better distribution through social security measures, family allowances, a higher level of salaries, and sounder methods of taxation of a kind that will press equally on all, and not favour the rich at the expense of the poor.

Fundamental Error

Finally the Pope denounces the fundamental error on which the whole of our economic structure is based. It is neither essentially Christian, he says, nor truly human, but mainly technical and economic, and is therefore does not rest on the solid basis of the common characteristic that belongs to all men, *viz.*, their human nature and their divine adoption as sons of God.

Conclusions of the Social Week

To us in India the conclusions of the Conference can be very advantageous. They give us an insight into the mind of an industrially developed country, with a typically Christian background and Christian convictions. However they may not all be equally applicable to an underdeveloped country like ours where the problems are of a different nature. France is an advanced industrial country, despite the fact that some 50% of its population is still engaged in agriculture.

Following the lead of the Papal letter, the Conference laid down certain basic propositions which it considered as the necessary foundation for the improved type of social organism it wished to build.

In the first place it reminded all Frenchmen of the great inequality of wealth that still persists in the country despite the increase in production. Not merely are there a large number of people still in the lower grades of income which compel them to live on a sub-human standard of existence,

but the victims of inflation and devaluation, the homeless, the North African workmen, and the displaced persons, fall within this category of destitution. Beyond national boundaries, there is the great distinction between the wealthy and the poverty-stricken countries of the world. There is poverty that is the result of an unjust system and poverty due to human deficiency. The first is man-made and should be remedied by social justice, the second by charity. But no amount of private effort can hope to successfully tackle so vast a problem. There is need of new institutions to handle the difficult situations that have arisen in a modern industrial world shattered by wars and international strife.

Secondly, while greater production and better distribution was insisted upon, the Christian outlook demanded the correct appreciation of the purpose of human welfare. Material satisfaction is not an end in itself; it must be subordinated to spiritual welfare. So too the right of private property while guaranteeing individual freedom must also be made to serve the interests of the community. The mass of people must be provided with the basic essentials, before the wealthy may be permitted to squander their wealth on luxuries.

Thirdly, the equality of men is based on their common human nature and their immortal destiny. This does not preclude the special efforts that must be made to rehabilitate the vast numbers of the very poor.

Fourthly, to achieve these highly desirable goals without recourse to dictatorial methods which destroy human freedom, it will be necessary to ensure a fair distribution of the wealth of the country between different social groups and among members of each group. This action must be followed up by a further redistribution through the public agency to remedy the defects of the first.

Suggestions

On the basis of these underlying principles, the Conference offered more pointed suggestions for the practical

fulfilment of these objectives. It was quite evident at the Conference that the fact of the world's oneness in things social and economic dominated the proceedings. It was felt that all men, white, black, brown, yellow, rich or poor, educated or illiterate, were so closely linked together into a single solid whole that the welfare or misery of one section affected the rest either favourably or unfavourably. It therefore became the duty of the richer nations to help the poorer. The more developed countries like those of Western Europe and America must help the underdeveloped peoples of South-East Asia and Africa. How can they do so?

So far the improvement and development of the economic welfare of peoples has taken place within national boundaries. But the present crisis calls for an international or a supranational authority that will seek to satisfy the basic economic and social needs of every individual. It must also have the power to enforce its authority.

Because of the existence of such economic and social dependence between nations, colonies have a special claim for help from the mother country.

It was also admitted that the French economy was in a critical state of tension due to the difficult choice that lay before its leaders. They had to choose between stimulating the increase of consumption goods, the production of industrial machinery, and the production of armaments. This decision would deeply affect the country's standards of living.

Distribution

At the first stage of distribution, when land, labour, capital and business organisation receive their share of the total national revenue, efforts must be made to divide the additional fruits of increased production in an equitable manner. The increase of production should bring down prices, and on the other hand the workman must receive from his work not only a better salary, but also a moral

satisfaction, that team spirit alone, animated by the notion of service, can give him. In other words, he must be treated as a responsible partner in industry.

Second Distribution

Social security plays an important part in redistributing income in order to make up for the deficiencies of the first division of the national revenue. Unfortunately in France, social security has merely brought about a redistribution of wealth among the poorer classes. In Britain, it has levelled up the inequalities between the rich and poor.

Public finance plays a capital part in redistributing the divided national income. Taxation should be skilfully used to make the wealthier bear the heavier burdens. But the devaluation of the monetary unit often leads to unjust and demoralising consequences ; it must therefore be undertaken with the greatest caution.

* * * * *

For Our Part

India is economically considered to be an underdeveloped country, though culturally she can take her place by the side of the most advanced nations of the world. Her per capita income ranks with the eight countries that have the lowest income level in the world. The per capita income in the U.S.A. is more than 25 times that of India. However the Truman Point Four Programme is helping her with financial and technical assistance. Some \$ 350 million have been spent last year on this scheme ; the money was expended not on India alone, but on the other countries of South-East Asia, like Pakistan, Ceylon, Indonesia, Malaya, Burma, Thailand, and Indo-China. The motives that have impelled the U.S.A. to help India have not been altogether altruistic, or the outcome of a spirit of sheer good-neighbourliness, or from any conviction of human solidarity, though the help rendered is certainly a tribute to American generosity and good-will. The frightening advance of Communism in Asia has shaken American complacency and

smugness, and stirred the U.S.A. to keep India within the ranks of the free democracies more than any ideological beliefs could have done.

The French Social Week demand for a supranational structure is however not a Utopian dream. If the nations do not shed their false ideas of sovereignty and come together of their own accord, they will either succumb to the Communist menace, or be compelled to do so by the grim spectre of war and its accompanying evils.

Colonialism

To an Indian, one must frankly confess, the colonial policy of many of the Western European nations is hard to understand. Despite the Catholic belief in the human family of nations, the French conference did not make any constructive approach to the problem in the sense of advising Frenchmen to give up some of their outdated notions of a French Empire. At least as regards French territory in India the case is obvious. In this respect, the British approach has been much more realistic and generous.

Statistical Information

If France can complain of a lack of statistical data and insufficient co-operation between the government and the people how much more so is this the case in India. Statistical information in this country is very meagre. We are not even certain of the National per capita income, which is placed at \$ 76.9 from calculations made during the post-war years. Compared to standards of living in the U. K. and the U. S. A. which approach and over-leap the \$ 1500 mark respectively, much leeway has still to be made by our country to provide its people with even the most basic needs of decent human subsistence.

Distribution

In India the primal distribution of the national revenue has been woefully neglected. We have been plagued by a

feudalistic and socially backward system that has held the masses of the people in thrall for generations. But the social structure is being slowly transformed to suit the new ideology of equality, democracy and social justice enshrined in the Constitution. If this primal distribution is in much need of repair, the secondary distribution through direct and indirect taxation is slowly grinding down the high peaks of income and narrowing the differences between the rich and poor more effectively. The Rajas and the Zamindars are fast disappearing ; the big industrialists are feeling the pressure of income tax and taxes on profits. The social legislation of government has improved the situation of the industrial workman to some extent.

Nationalisation

The great danger is the nationalisation policy of the government in power. Instead of stimulating private enterprise, and keeping rigidly to the business like the large-scale irrigation projects which only the vast resources of a modern government in under-developed countries can perform, the Indian government has taken over efficiently-run public utilities like road transport, and bungled into the bargain. Even the Five-Year Plan fails to make any clear-cut distinction between the public and the private sector within which private enterprise will be permitted to act freely and without fear of nationalisation.

Social Benefits

Except for a social insurance scheme for a few hundred thousand workmen, benefits like family allowances, or unemployment relief are unknown in India. The Five-Year Plan aims to make the country self-sufficient in food and to raise the standard of life of the agricultural masses. The choice is a correct one. At the present time the Welfare State can only be a distant dream of the future for India. Before welfare comes a decent human subsistence level of well-being to be ensured to all the people.

Devaluation

The rupee has been devalued with the inevitable rise of internal prices ; this could hardly be helped when one remembers the enormous inflation of the war years. But the confidence of the people in their currency is unshaken.

These few '*obiter dicta*' on the economic and social situation of the country might well be worth further investigation and form the rich material for ampler discussion at some Indian Social Week in the not too distant future.

A. Fonseca.

SOCIAL CLASSES

Karl Marx was afflicted with simplism ; he was prone to make matters easy and the easiest way to make matters easy is to stress one or other of the many data of human problems to the exclusion of others. A striking instance of his mania was his view of history. He had painstakingly studied economic conditions as obtained in his day and, with superficial haste, fancied and proclaimed that things had been going on much the same way at all periods of history. In his time workmen were exploited and their struggles against employers led to revolts and revolutions ; this was made the secret of historical development. Class-war was a dominant factor which shaped politics in his day ; it had always been so, he concluded, and would always be so until Communism would do away with classes and class-war. Marx was as hasty as the unfortunate husband who had married a wretched cook of a wife and asserted for all the world to hear that family quarrels are uniformly due to bad cooking.

There was worse. When studying contemporary conditions, Marx chose to ignore the play ambition and pride in kings, ministers and leaders influence the course of

events. He failed to see the complex character of society and with blundering simplism, divided society into two classes bourgeoisie and proletariat. (This in "Class-struggles in France"; not in "Capital" where he mentions proletarians, capitalists and land-owners respectively getting wages, profits and rents, or where he enumerates many classes corresponding to professional groups). The binary was taken up by Lenin, Stalin and the Marxist propagandists who make it into an axiom. What is unexpected is that quite a few anti-Marxists use it without much hesitation; they take what they call 'the wage-earning' as a convenient if not a sufficient basis for social organisation.

Is it wise to accept the battle on the ground chosen by the enemy? Is it sound to postpone attempts at reforms by which this opposition is abolished and "well-ordered members of the social body are constituted in which men may have their place not according to the position each has on the labour market but according to the respective social function which each performs" (Quadr. Ann.)? What these orders should be (guilds, professional associations, co-operative groups) is outside our present purview. What we aim at clarifying is a word and a notion which are somewhat difficult to elucidate, namely, social classes.

Class is not indicative of status which is fixed, nor of a caste which is rigid. It is not identical with profession since profession divides society in vertical slices whilst class suggests horizontal layers. These preliminary remarks clear the ground a little. Further progress could be made by a systematic examination of the various theories which have been advanced to explain and justify the existence of classes; but it would be a tedious and unprofitable work and it is sufficient for purpose to summarise the conclusions which are generally acceptable to modern sociologists.

In a general manner it may be said that two factors enter the definition of a class and explain its rise and its evolution. The first is a tangible factor; it is a typical task

in society. The second, immaterial, is a common consciousness among the members of a given class. How can a special task be discharged by a social task, how can a typical function be determined? The matter calls for attention. In the successive steps of the economic process, one notices that practically at all stages, different people are entrusted some with the direction, others with the execution of the economic step, the roles of direction and execution being complex and variable. At the top we have bank directors, ministers, etc., whose function is limited to direction. At the bottom we have the workingman whose task is mainly factual execution though he may possibly be assisted by coolies. Between these two strata there are found managers, engineers, foremen, etc., whose role is partly directive, partly executive. The greater the share direction has is an individual's role, the higher he is placed in society. Even the most thoroughgoing egalitarian cannot escape making this distinction between direction and execution; in the days of the Red honeymoon the Soviet fancied they could abolish the distinction but experience brought it back with ruthless emphasis so much so that current Communist doctrine and practice surround all "directors" with a glamour unknown in democracies.

On the other hand one must note the varied proportion in which technical, economic and social aspects enter and qualify the function a certain class is fulfilling in society. In our social stratification technical skill is little required at the higher levels; practical skill in banking, engineering, etc., is hardly expected at the top; a bank governor may be sluggish in calculating foreign exchanges, top engineers may fumble with a slide-rule, a health minister may be a poor doctor or even no doctor at all, etc. In short technical skill is no measure of social ascension.

In all tasks economic and social elements are mixed. This can be evidenced in a summary analysis. Producing goods, distributing commodities, fostering consumption; preparing and enacting legislation, building up jurisprud-

ence, administering enterprises and public departments, etc., all functions of public life imply a social status and economic interests, in varied degrees. Teachers and gardeners, lawyers and brick-layers, etc., have their respective impact on the economic and on the social complex of the state and their position in society will not be regarded as equal even if their money incomes are equal.

Economic wealth, however, plays its part in the process of social stratification; it may even play the leading part and predominate in public life. Producers are tempted and are attempting to direct the course of social life, the more so that economic interests foster solidarity and class formation. Even without any formal association, bankers and businessmen spare no effort to dominate the economic life of the nation by having production organised and protected as suits them best ; "they regulate, so to speak, the flow of the life-blood whereby the entire economic system lives and have so firmly in their grasp the soul as it were of economic life that no one can breathe against their will" (Quadr. Ann.). Against them are arrayed the workmen who have learned that strength comes from union and that union is easily cemented by common poverty ; in their turn they aim at seizing power on legislation and nurse the ambition to become the leading class in economic and social life. Many are not satisfied with conditions of equity or equality, they aim at the dictatorship of the proletariat. It would be foolish to ignore that in this sorry world of ours, money means power and that power and its distribution influence social estimation of values and increases the space between the rungs of the social ladder.

In addition to the above-mentioned elements which bear on the common view of the social scale, other factors contribute to the complexity of social life ; such are language, race, religion, etc. An invading race amidst conquered tribes, an international language vis-a-vis a local dialect, monotheism facing animism, etc., will easily develop a sense of superiority in class status.

This very consciousness of a differential status is a necessary ingredient for class formation. Class consciousness implies two psychological phenomena. First of all there must have developed a group-awareness, an objective or subjective notion and feeling that one's own class has a definite role to play in society, which notion and feeling can be strengthened by organisation.

Secondly the group should be aware that it must make an effort at playing that very role. One class will realise that it is responsible for production, even though it may exaggerate its importance ; another will be aware that it contributes to the maintenance of law and order, others that they control the circulation of goods, or the credit system, or the medical services, etc.

Putting together the foregoing notions, we may admit the definition of Mr. J. Lhomme : "A class is a human group which has a common function in society, is aware of it and does what is possible to fulfil it".

A further question arises. People speak of upper, middle and lower classes ; (note the plural) ; the French more pointedly speak of "classes dirigeantes" and "classes dirigées" (directing and directed classes). Are there truly, as Aristotle pretended, human groups born to be slaves and others to be masters ? Does the group, considered as a social organ, create the function (ruling or slaving) ? Or does the function create the organ ? Let us take what are called the lower classes ; when analysing the conclusions of case-work and group-work among them, one can trace the causes of their social inferiority. With regard to their physical deterioration it is found that when it occurs it is the outcome of material conditions : poverty or even destitution, exhausting labour, unhealthy conditions at work, lack of medical attendance, etc. As to their mentality it often reveals arrested or subnormal development. Pity is frequently absent, decency and self-respect little appreciated, education neglected, sensibility thwarted and repressed, general

deportment roughened. These and all other similar deficiencies are mostly due to the wretched material conditions of their life. Once food, clothing, housing are improved and educational facilities offered, men born in these lower classes not unfrequently can climb the steps of the social ladder, and their children or at least grandchildren are met with in the upper classes.

There is in reality no rigidity in social stratification, and the movement between the classes up or down works with surprising ease, except where philosophers have succeeded in freezing classes into castes. In the order of nature there is no group of men that is created to rule and another to be ruled ; no innate superiority or inferiority precludes the ascension or prevents the descent of one group, class or race to the neighbouring level. The organ does not create the function ; one should rather say that the social function of a class maintains and develops qualities or deficiencies in given groups. The greater the facilities for moving from one class to the next, the more easily the less qualified among the upper classes will fall to their fitting level, and the more the well-gifted among the lower strata will rise to a function suited to their talent and merit; on balance the greater this ease of circulation between classes, the richer will be the social wealth of a civil society.

A. Lallemand.

REVIEW OF REVIEWS

It may be helpful, were it only by way of a change in style, to present some of the Catholic reviews which show interest to social matters and are devoted to social problems.

The Little Monthlies

By a happy coincidence, the most diminutive of them all *The Christian Democrat* (Catholic Social Guild, Oxford) has an editorial on "The Little Monthlies" which admirably suits our own *Social Action*. "When one turns to that stream of minor publications referred to with affectionate tolerance as 'the little monthlies' a question mark, at first sight more than justified, begins to appear in some minds. After all, what purpose do they serve? The same question, no doubt, could have been asked of each one of the fleet of tiny craft which brought back to safety the beaten British army from the beaches of Dunkirk. By itself each one of the little ships seemed an insignificant thing; together they saved the world. So with the little monthlies. By itself each seems so flimsy; together all bear witness to the voluntary spirit of responsible endeavour which is the hall-mark of the free society. There are no small monthlies in Stalin's Russia; there were none in Germany in Hitler's time. Their existence is incompatible with tyranny. On that ground alone they deserve well of those who read them." The fact that *Social Action* (like *The Christian Democrat*) is classed amongst the little monthlies brings no shame whatever to its editor. "Precisely because of the smallness of its size, he feels that it deserves continued support. He asks for that support from those who believe with him that the voluntary spirit which persists in the production of the small periodical—often in the face of the heaviest odds—is part and parcel of the life blood of those who are free." "There is more to it than that. Despite its small size, it is, so far as we know, the only periodical in the country which has, for its main aim, the promulgation of Catholic social teaching.

It stands, in other words, for an ideal of social life which is absolutely essential to the future of this country; and the fact that its size (for size depends on circulation) is still small bears tragic witness to the fact that the desire of the four million Catholics in this country to understand that ideal is still pitifully inadequate. The contrast with Communist zeal is unpleasantly obvious and needs no enlargement here."

Along with our English colleague we conclude, "it remains to ask each one of our readers most earnestly whether in addition to renewing his own subscription this year, he would be so good as to subscribe" to *Social Action* on behalf of one of his friends.

In this same spirit of solidarity with the little monthlies, we welcome a recent newcomer *The Aero-Worker*, the organ of the Air-India Catholic Association, Bombay. It breathes sane patriotism and religious inspiration with its editorial on Republic Day and with extracts of the Papal message to the Ernakulam crowds: "Close your ranks and stand together . . . In this union and concord is your strength . . . The Church forces no one to adopt foreign ways of living. The Church belongs to the East as well as to the West. She is bound to no particular culture, she is at home with all who respect the commands of God . . . This once made clear, it is for you to be conscious of your duty to your country and people". *The Aero-Worker* shows as well that realistic spirit which goes with sound trade-unionism; it carries short notes on unionist purposes and activities and details local events with pleasant brevity.

Among the little monthlies, we may also put *Social Survey*, the journal of the Institute of Social Order of Melbourne. The editor stresses the tragic conditions of the world and anxiously calls on Australians to wake up to the perils of the hour. "Under God it is only greatness—of mind, of heart, of spirit—which will save a nation endangered as Australia is today."

There follows a study of various trouble-spots : the Sinkiang Atomic Arsenal, Kashmir, the Islamic world, Russia. The Discussion Outlines on Pan-Islamism and on Migration are most instructive and show a keen sense of realism and a rare breadth of view. A spiritual discussion bears an institutional apostolate : as the Australian hierarchy well said, the Lay Apostolate is primarily concerned with 'social pressures', it seeks to 'modify' them, to 'direct' them, even to 'create the social forces in the midst of which individuals must live their lives and save their souls'.

Related to the little monthlies, we have the little periodical *Notes on Islam*, a bulletin of information about Islam, a help to a better appraisement of Islamic culture (Oriental Institute, Calcutta). The contents of 1952 covered the All-Pakistan Women Association, the Moors and Social Welfare, Mullas and Mullaism, the Hadith Tradition, Maryam in the Qur'an and Islam, etc. What makes the particular interest of the *Notes* is the regular digest of Muslim news (political, economic and social questions, culture and education, religion), an informative summary most useful for those who have little opportunity of putting Pakistan news together.

The Catholic Worker (New York) is also a little monthly published in the garb of a newspaper. Many young Americans do not like it, largely because it defends pacifism with ethical and religious arguments and supports individual cases of conscientious objectors. In our view it has a unique merit among all American periodicals : it reveals genuine stories of misery in a plutocratic world and it propagandises the beauties of voluntary Poverty ; in other words, it shows the U.S.A. like other nations has cases of squalor and of mysticism, a binomial to be found in the other nations of Christendom.

The Catholic Worker is the organ of the Catholic Worker Movement founded by Peter Maurin and is edited by Dorothy Day. The Movement is running Houses of Hospitality which are open to all strays and waifs of large cities,

providing bread and shelter free of charge and with Farming Communes which ambition to rehabilitate human derelicts on a basis of cult, cultivation, and culture. Besides a journal of Dorothy Day, and stories of community life, the paper carries telling reviews of important books and articles of mystical inspiration. The number of its subscribers (some 60,000) well shows that all Americans are not afflicted with the dollar complex.

American Journals

Of larger size and of dignified appearance is *Relations*, published by the Jesuits of French Canada (Montreal). It is mostly devoted to the interests of the Canadian minority (some four millions out of a total of fourteen millions). School problems, minority problems, cultural questions, are taken in turn from the minority's point of view. It reveals the good spirit of that minority: national pride, cultural autonomy, will to survive. It might serve as a model of a minority periodical for the several minorities we have in India. Its outlook is not narrow, its preoccupation is to guide the modernisation of French Canadian traditions, and its style has kept the stateliness of Louis XIV's French.

Social Order, the monthly of the Institute of Social Order (Saint Louis, U.S.A.), enjoys the distinction of publishing on suitable occasions articles of competent sociological technique. The December issue, for instance, has a study of Marriage Breakdown by J. L. Thomas. The author studied no less than seven thousand cases among Catholics, and analysed the causal factors of the breakdowns. The relation of causality has to be ascertained with care. For example, drink may be a factor in the breakdown, it may also be a mere symptom and an escape from a dissatisfaction which started with temperamental differences. Categories must also be made between types of marriages, war marriages, widows' marriages, marriages of elderly people, etc. Having separated such groups, he was left with eighty per

cent as marriages contracted under apparently normal conditions.

Among breakdowns of those "normal marriages", he found out that they could be attributed to various causal factors: 29.8 per cent to drink, 24.8 to adultery, 12.4 to irresponsibility, 12.1 to temperaments, and the rest to in-laws, sex maladjustments, religious differences, mental or financial troubles. Drink and adultery were the main causal factors. Drink is expensive, leads to physical cruelty, to illicit relations, etc.; in nearly all cases the husband was the guilty party.

Adultery comes next in importance. This causal factor of breakdown is difficult to investigate but it would be a mistake to take it as nothing more than a symptom of frustration. We must face the fact that some individuals find monogamy both trying and monotonous. Owing to the manifold opportunities for infidelity in certain groups, such individuals easily get entangled in extra-marital affairs, and they then readily project the blame on the faithful spouse. The writer groups the cases according to racial origin, ages et marriage, sex, etc.

The third largest category deals with irresponsibility or immaturity; it is the case of one or of both partners getting married without recognizing the basic obligations of the marriage contract. The fourth treats of temperamental differences; here the research worker found he had a difficult job. Accusations of jealousy, "mental" cruelty, "queerness", neglect, selfishness, meanness, and all other like phrases of the examinees are relative and mean quite different things to different individuals. He felt however he was justified in grouping them under the same heading.

In his summary, he concludes that for the average Catholic studied, the institution of marriage is something serious, imposing real obligations. Only the failure to fulfil one of the essential roles of marriage was sufficient to break up the marriage in the majority of the cases. He also con-

cludes that too much emphasis is sometimes placed on initial adjustments to the neglect of pointing out that marriage is a dynamic union which requires constant adaptation along constantly changing lines. A good start is not enough, however helpful it is ; husband and wife should be awakened to the probability of friction later and of consequent adaptation. To forewarn is to forearm them.

Social Theologians

Theological reviews which are at their happiest when dealing with things everlasting are most helpful when shedding their light on our humble mundane society. A recent issue (December 1952) of *Theological Studies* (Woodstock, U.S.A.) carries an excellent article of J. C. Murray on "The Church and Totalitarian Democracy". Its purpose is to support the contention that the primary emphasis in the doctrine of Leo XIII falls on the Gelasian thesis. The emphasis was called for by polemic necessity against the Jacobin foundation of the French Revolution as well as by the fundamental position in Christian doctrine. Civil society and the political authority that rules it are from God through nature ; the Church and her spiritual authority are from God through Christ; hence the distinction of the two societies and their powers and laws, the primacy of the spiritual and the need for harmony between them. The enemy is the rationalist concept of freedom based on the absolute autonomy of human reason, which would make man's will the sole origin of society. In the Christian view, society originates both in nature and in the will of man. By nature man is a free person ; also by nature he stands under social authority. Nature does not dictate any particular concrete political form ; it is for man to build up political institutions, both those through which the principle of social authority will operate and also those through which the personal freedom can be expressed.

It is only when we take into account the background of Papal pronouncements that we can harmonise the state-

ments of Leo XIII against the Jacobin "modern liberties" and of Pius XI's Allocution (Christmas 1944) approving government by the people and active vocal citizenry.

Canon W. J. Philbin in *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* (January 1953) considers the relations between "The Individual and the State". He cautions his readers against the encroachments of governments on individual rights, in the light of modern scientific progress. He writes on the background of an Ireland where English rule has been shaken off but where English public affairs still provide the chief headlines in the press. Ireland is the best-off and most contented of all nations, but on the material side of things it is not among the most progressive nations. Yet "religion embodies an obligation to make good and prudent use of material things. We may have a blind spot here. Because of our isolated geographical position at the extreme end of Europe and for other reasons that we may speculate about, we have need to make a more deliberate effort than other nations to keep abreast of the times economically. In the modern world no country can afford to be left behind. To allow this may open the way for drastic measures including totalitarianism and even the extreme form of totalitarianism which is the enemy of religion and of all spiritual values."

"We should do what we can to welcome and foster all those organisations that bring people together to examine and take counsel about their common problems, whether these concern farming or industry or social questions or better house-keeping . . . They will be signs of a healthy and self-reliant democracy which is the best guarantee we can have against the undue preponderance of the state."

In Ireland too, besides the *Irish Monthly* which is a review of general interest, we have the quarterly *Christus Rex*, the organ of the Christus Rex Society. This society of Irish diocesan priests was founded in 1941 to implement the instructions of the *Quadragesimo Anno*; they hold annual meetings and local meetings of enquiry committees. They

aim at making Ireland a model Catholic nation and "a light unto the revelation of the nations". During 1952 their main effort was centred round the Irish rural family, the fishing industry, and social insurance. The quarterly publishes a series of "Social Topics" by Rev. J. O'Leary which comes in handy for talks on social principles. One would wish future studies on the sociology of Irish parishes so as to have a fair picture of life in the green island.

In Fair France

From France come the two sister-reviews, *Economie et Humanisme* (a bi-monthly) and *Efficacité* (a monthly) which publish the research, information and policy of a studious group of social workers. The bi-monthly into which the former *Cahiers* and *Diagnostic* coalesced is most instructive for outsiders as it normally devotes each issue to one particular topic. The Nov.-December issue treats of conditions in the U.S.S.R. Economic information about Russia is hard to come by and hard to interpret; the information is usually sketchy, the statistics government-selected, the economic values special to the country, etc.

Mr. J. Y. Calvez studies the total equilibrium of Russian economy, which equilibrium is supposed to achieve harmony between the various human economic relations. Owing to the government monopoly of information and direction, it is difficult to make out whether production answers the needs of consumption; it is also difficult to estimate if individual needs and national needs are adjusted to meet present and future conditions; the interference of political necessities vitiates all attempts at economic valuation.

After a description of the structure of Soviet undertakings which cannot be compared with industrial structure in capitalist regimes, and a comparison between prices in Moscow and in Paris, the review analyses the Second Five-year plan in course of execution and the problems special to agriculture. In general the objectives of the Plan are sound and the main question mark refers to the endur-

ance that will be necessary to attain them. Industry is of course given top priority as in the previous plans and as indicated in the Marxist ideology. Agriculture is not however neglected, but rather assigned tasks which may prove beyond reach. The difference between agricultural progress and industrial advance is due to factors which are rarely publicised. Why this difference? The reasons are many; the major part of Russian land cannot be brought under cultivation: as much as four-fifths of the territory occupied in 1941. Moreover the climate is largely unfavourable: insufficient or irregular rains in several regions, short summer season (100 to 110 days), frequent storms or early frost. On the other hand the soil in the cultivable regions is not of uniform quality a factor which is obscured by the mass-statistics. Finally there is the peculiar mentality of the Russian peasant (ignorance, routine, passive resistance, etc.). These different factors can only militate against the Five-year objectives. The Plan aims at an increase of 60% in cereals and some 25% in livestocks. Will the mechanical equipment be available and suitable? Will the agricultural workers respond to the State demands? The fortune of the Plan is hidden in the answer to these two questions.

Soviet culture and ideology are then analysed. Literature is under government control and inspiration; the party line is imposed and checked rigorously. Yet in the details of narratives, the non-marxist passions and the humanist aspirations of the people are visible. Love however is severely kept in check, and humour is tabooed. Russia will make for liberty when her frontiers will be opened and cartoons on Stalin tolerated.

The educational system has few peculiarities according to the rather superficial survey of travellers, barring the political youth movements, (pioneers and komsomols). The government is most keen on shaping the souls of children and youths; in the words of Kalinin "education is a definite and systematic influence on the psychology of the

pupil to inculcate qualities desired by the educator, a given view of the world, a given ethics and certain rules of conduct in Society". No religious instruction at all; it can only be had at home by the over-eighteen youths.

The fate of the Orthodox Church which was vowed to destruction according to Orthodox Marxism has been somewhat improved owing to the leading patriotism of bishops and clerics; the internal dissensions have been mended and traditional orthodoxy has triumphed. But it is impossible to estimate the number of clergymen, the trends in theological teaching and the appeal the Church makes to the masses.

The evolution of Marxism under Stalin's guidance is a matter which is somewhat abstruse for the ordinary reader, who will go straight to the article of P. Laurac on Communist Russia and International Peace. Russia has grown into the second most powerful nation of the world; does this justify hope or fear? The 1918 armistice forced Russia to achieve her revolution through ruthless nationalisation, hence to pursue internal integration and protect herself by keeping away and even 'sabotaging' foreign countries. After 1945 Russia who had secured access to ice-free harbours forced her satellites to pursue a parallel policy of internal integration and isolation from capitalist countries. It was in line with such a policy that the Marshall Plan was not accepted; Eastern Europe had to break away from Western Europe and build up the Marxist world. The policy in regard to China and in the U.N.O. has a like goal.

Russia wants peace, but *her* peace. The best that can be hoped for is "the cold war".

La Vie Intellectuelle, a neat and compact monthly edited by the competent Dominican Fathers of Paris, is not exclusively devoted to technical problems of sociology; it does rather supply social workers with a general background which is necessary for focussing social questions: information of world interests, chronicles on film, theatre, literature, and the economic and political topics of greater importance.

As illustrative of the review's range, we may take the December issue ; in one article of D. Dubarle, the modern systems of cosmology and in relations to the dogma of creation are studied. In another J. Perrot narrates the tensions within the Christian Labour Movement in France ; J. Domenach tells his motives for going to the Berlin congress against rearmament. The editor recalls the principles which should enlighten Catholics in their choice between possible attitudes to war. At every page we detect the same care and boldness to deal with up-to-date problems and explain the principles of solution.

Among the institutes of social apostolate in France, the Action Populaire is possibly the first, and can boast of over fifty years existence and work. This social centre groups some twenty Jesuits dedicated to the study, publicity and propaganda of social doctrine. It publishes two periodicals, *Revue d'Action Populaire* (a monthly) and *Cahiers d'Action Religieuse et Sociale* (a bi-monthly). The *Cahiers* supply regular information on facts and views distributed under hundreds of headings so that they can find a ready place in social files.

The December issue of the monthly analyses the idea of Christian peace, (Papal speech to a Pax Christi pilgrimage, an address of von Galli at the Katholikentag of Berlin, and a study on international duties), various tasks of modern states (evolution of the notion of social protection in France, government role in saving industrial Britain). Finally the Chronicles deal with the disparity in standards of living in the various French departments and with the last Communist Congress in Moscow.

A new series of studies is announced for 1953 : research work in doctrine and institutions, plans for enquiry and action, unpublished documents, topical chronicles and bibliography. Are in preparation a study of the social teaching of Pius XII, of conditions for women factory workers, the geography of hunger, Stalinists enigmas, and a survey of Eastern Germany.

The above tour of Catholic reviews devoted to social problems is far from being complete ; it omits the publications in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Holland, Germany, South-America ; it does not even mention all Catholic reviews in the several countries covered. Yet it well reveals the intense interest Catholics all over the world take in social questions and their hearty co-operation in social effort. After such a tour "Social Action" feels very small indeed, a tiny little monthly.

A. LAHURI.

BOOK-NOTES AND REVIEWS

As many leaders in social work are anxious to have one or other ready-made syllabus to make sure they will cover the whole social question in the courses they plan, they may be recommended two recent new text-books. The first comes from the Papal Gregorian University : *Compendium Ethicae Socialis* by Rev. G. Jarlot, s.j., (Rome, Pont. Univers. Gregor., 1951), Pp. 192. The learned professor of sociology opens his course with an explanation of society (social theories, social nature of man, types of society, nature of civil society). He passes on to the domestic society and details the rights of its members. He then goes on to state the principles and the important applications of ethics in the economic and in the political life ; private property, just price, interest on investments, and fair wages ; foundations of state life and organisation, civil authority, and popular suffrage, rebellion.

The last chapter deals with international ethics : treaties, colonies, war and peace. We must confess that the manner of dealing with the colonial problem is hardly satisfactory. The arguments brought usually are recited without any discussion of their bearing. What of the right of appropriating the wealth of a people under the plea that they do not put it to the use of mankind ? Should not this

be applied also to "advanced" nations? Is the argument in harmony with the Quadragesimo Anno which states that the right of private property is not lost because it is not exploited? What of the right to suppress an existing state (however unmodern it may look) to secure economic advantages? If it be right to send settlers to colonise backward areas, what about sending a few migrants to undeveloped regions of modern states? Would it not be helpful to discuss these points in an international conference of moralists that would include authentic representatives from the colonies?

The shorter treatise (pp. 128) of Rev. F. Cimetier, P.S.S., *Brève Synthèse de Théologie Morale Sociale* (Paris, Desclée) is less scholastic in form and more readily suitable as a syllabus for our schools and colleges. The contents run as follows: general social ethics, social ethics of family, civil society, professional and economic life, with a few excellent pages on the means of bringing economic life up to moral standards; the last chapter treats of Church and State.

The weaker parts of the book in our view relate to points of colonisation and of international organisation, which reflect the hard-to-avoid bias current in western powers.

A. Lahuri.

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3. To serve as a centre of information about Catholic social works.

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